

Defending the Isle: Yarmouth & Fort Victoria Country Park

IW INDICATOR



DISTANCE



With its colour-washed cottages and picturesque square, Yarmouth is just the place to begin an Island walk. The Isle of Wight has always been vulnerable to enemy attack and nowhere is this better illustrated than at Yarmouth.

Just by the ferry terminal stands one of Henry VIII's coastal defences, built in the 16th century to guard against invasion by the French who regarded the Island as a convenient stepping stone in their plan to attack mainland Britain. The walk follows the placid waters of the River Yar south to Freshwater and then heads for Fort Victoria Country Park on the coast.

It was the narrow stretch of the Solent between the Island and the mainland that Fort Victoria was built to defend in 1853. What remains of the fort today is in the care of the Isle of Wight Council and forms part of a popular 50-acre country park.



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- 1 On arrival at Yarmouth ferry terminal, walk ahead to the roundabout and follow the exit for Newport. Pass the primary school and turn right into Mill Road. On reaching a left-hand bend, go straight on along the path signposted Freshwater and Broad Lane.

- 2 With the River Yar on your right, follow the path south. Head for a gate, keep right at the junction and follow bridleway Y19. At length you reach a bungalow by the road. Turn right at this point and cross the bridge, passing a pillbox. Walk up the lane into Freshwater, keeping the parish church and the Red Lion on your right.



- 3 Go straight ahead at the junction, heading in the direction of Totland and Freshwater. Pass the village post office on your right and veer right just after it to follow path F66 (signposted School Green/Golden Hill). Pass a path to Church Place and keep ahead. On reaching a bridleway and school on the left, turn right and climb gently between trees, passing a bungalow.



- 4 Cut through woodland, heading towards Golden Hill. Make for a junction and on the right here you will see the entrance to an old fort. Follow the track towards Yarmouth and Totland, keeping to the right of various industrial buildings. Turn left at the main road, and shortly you swing right into Monks Lane.



- 5 Pass a sign for Linstone Chine holiday village and walk straight on, following the Isle of Wight coast path. Avoid a path to Norton and on reaching the entrance to Cliff End holiday village, go right at the entrance, still on the coastal trail. Look for a sign for Fort Victoria Country Park, descend some steps and follow the path through the woods. Turn left at a sign for toilets and head for Fort Victoria.



- 6 Pass alongside the building and make for the exit road, with views of the Solent and Needles Passage on your left. Rejoin the coastal path and follow the road for about 80 metres. Turn left at a sign 'Danger - bathing prohibited' and join path F6 for Yarmouth. Follow the path through woodland to the shore and turn right. Keep right at a sign 'Access by foot to Yarmouth and town centre' and turn left at the road. Walk back to the start of the walk.



USEFUL INFORMATION

- Distance: 6 miles
- Time: 2¼ hours
- Map: Explorer OL29 - 1:25 000 scale 4cm to 1km or 2½" to 1 mile
- Start/Finish: Yarmouth
- Refreshments: A good choice of pubs and cafes in Yarmouth; the Red Lion at Freshwater and a cafe at Fort Victoria Country Park
- Suitable for: Adults, children and dogs

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